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SMALLER TURKEY CROP EXPECTED THIS YEAR

Turkey growers plan to raise 42,445,000 turkeys this year. This production would be about 5 percent less than the record crop of last year and the first time a decrease has been planned since 1941. Turkey producers in the West, who produced 30 percent of the turkeys raised in 1945, plan a decrease of 18 percent this year. In the West North Central States, which produced 29 percent of last year's crop, a decrease of 3 percent is expected. In the South Central States and South Atlantic States, however, growers plan an increase of 5 percent, while in the North Atlantic and East North Central States growers intend to produce about the same number as in 1945.

Some difference between January 1 intentions and actual performance is to be expected, the difference depending on the availability and prices of feed, and on prices of hatching eggs and poults. Last year the number of turkeys raised exceeded the January intentions by 13 percent, because of the shortage of red meats and the increases in turkey prices during the hatching season. In 1944 producers raised 8 percent more than they intended on January 1 of that year. In earlier years, however, the intentions have exceeded actual performance -- in 1943 by 12 percent, in 1942 by 8 percent, in 1941 by less than 1 percent, in 1939 and 1940 by 2 percent, and in 1938 by 3 percent.

Favorable weather brought hens into an early lay in 1945 and started last season off with an early hatch. Although there were 8 percent more breeder hens on hand in 1945 than in 1944, hatcheries were unable to supply fully last year's heavy early demand for poults. To meet the increasing demand, hatcheries in 1945 continued their hatching season at least a month longer than in 1944, and the production of poults was limited by the supply of hatching eggs. The rate of lay and fertility were high in most sections of the country. Also, the death loss of hens was the lowest since 1940 and the loss of poults was the lowest in 8 years of record. These favorable factors contributed to a production of a 1945 turkey crop far larger than was intended on January 1 of that year.

During the last month, since the receipt of the data upon which this report is based, there have been reports of heavy cancellation of orders for poults in several important areas due to uncertainty of feed supplies. These cancellations followed W.F.O.-9 Amendment 4, effective January 14, 1946, restricting the delivery, receipt, and use of protein meal and soybeans used in poultry feeds.

RECORD NUMBER OF BREEDER HENS THIS YEAR

With a 15 percent increase in breeder hens on January 1 this year compared with a year ago, the supply of eggs for hatching will be much greater than will be required to produce a turkey crop of the size in prospect for 1946. Reports during the last week indicate that the demand for hatching eggs has not been sufficient to clear the supply and that as a result of the heavy cancellation of orders for poults, many breeder flocks are being sold for slaughter. As turkey eggs are used only for hatching and as the feed situation appears to be getting tighter, it is expected that the supply of turkey eggs will soon be reduced to the level of the demand. The number of breeder hens on January 1 was about 20 percent larger than would be required to supply the eggs needed to produce the intended 5 percent smaller turkey crop than in 1945.

The number of breeder hens is larger in all parts of the country than last year, with increases of 45 percent in the East North Central States, 28 percent in the North Atlantic, 21 percent in the South Atlantic, 12 percent in the Western, 9 percent in the West North Central,

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and 8 percent in the South Central States.. More than half of the Nation's breeder hens are located in the 5 States of California, Texas, Minnesota, Oregon and Missouri, ranking in the order named. These States showed increased in the number of breeders ranging from 20 percent in Missouri to 3 percent in Oregon. These 5 States produce millions of turkey eggs annually for shipment to hatcheries all over the United States. In these States, heavy marketings of breeder hens are under way, as a measure toward reducing the supply of hatching eggs to the demand.

BIRDS SOLD AT HEAVIER WEIGHT IN 1945

The average live weight per turkey sold in 1945 was 17.4 pounds, compared with 16.7 in 1944. Hens sold averaged 13.4 pounds compared with 13.1 in 1944, and toms averaged 21.3 pounds compared with 20.3 in 1944. The heaviest birds were produced in the West, especially in the Pacific Coast States where the broad-breasted turkey is raised in greatest numbers and where birds are raised to heavy weights, largely for the hotel and restaurant trade. In California, Oregon and Washington the hens average about 14.4 pounds live weight and toms average 24.1 pounds live weight. In 1945 there was a price differential of from 5 to 8 cents per pound, sometimes more in favor of hens, with greater demand for hens than for toms. For this reason, hens moved to the market sooner than toms and therefore were marketed at relatively lighter weights than toms.

AVERAGE LIVE WEIGHT PER TURKEY WHEN SOLD IN 1944 AND 1945

Geographic Division	Hens		Toms		All	
	1944	1945	1944	1945	1944	1945
	Pounds					
North Atlantic	12.6	13.2	19.2	19.9	15.9	16.5
East North Central	12.9	13.3	19.5	20.1	16.2	16.7
West North Central	12.9	13.3	20.1	21.1	16.5	17.2
South Atlantic	12.6	13.0	18.6	19.7	15.6	16.3
South Central	12.4	12.6	18.4	19.5	15.4	16.0
Western	14.0	14.1	22.6	23.5	18.3	18.8
United States	13.1	13.4	20.3	21.3	16.7	17.4
1944 Revised.						

DEATH LOSS LIGHTEST OF RECORD IN 1945

Loss of poults in 1945 was the lowest in 8 years of record. It was 22.5 percent of the number bought and home-hatched, compared with 25.9 percent in 1944 and 27.6 percent for the 5-year (1939-43) average.

Factors responsible for a lighter loss of young turkeys in 1945 were favorable weather during the early hatching season, which resulted in an early hatch of strong poults, and a favorable brooding and growing period, with very little damage from storms.. Losses from coyotes and other predatory animals, however, has been on the increase and accounted for a large part of the loss in some areas. Losses in 1945 were less in all parts of the country than in 1944, except in the West, where it was the same as in 1944.

Breeding hen losses in 1945 were the lightest since 1940 -- 9.6 percent compared with 10.7 percent in 1944, and with 10.6 percent, the 5-year average. Losses of hens were lighter than in 1944 in all parts of the country, except in the South Atlantic States, where the actual loss was 35 percent greater in 1945 than in 1944.

DEATH LOSS OF TURKEYS

Geographic Division	Young turkeys lost as a percent of total numbers bought and home hatched					Breeding stock lost as a percent of numbers on hand January 1				
	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
	Percent					Percent				
North Atlantic	17	19	23	23	18	7	8	8	9	8
East North Central	21	23	23	23	20	10	11	12	10	9
West North Central	24	28	29	23	18	10	10	13	11	9
South Atlantic	27	31	38	30	24	10	11	13	11	13
South Central	45	43	44	38	32	13	16	14	16	15
Western	22	21	21	22	22	8	7	8	7	6
United States	27.8	28.8	29.7	25.9	22.5	10.1	11.1	11.8	10.7	9.6

TURKEY HENS ON HAND AND INTENTIONS TO RAISE TURKEYS IN 1946

Turkey hens on hand Jan. 1			Turkeys raised		
State	1945	1946	1945	Intended in 1946	
Division	Number	% 1945	Number	% 1945	
	Thousands	Pct.	Thousands	Pct.	
Me.	8	10	52	50	96
N.H.	10	13	92	92	100
Vt.	16	19	207	213	103
Mass.	43	51	272	277	102
R.I.	4	4	35	35	100
Conn.	23	26	185	189	102
N.Y.	47	67	586	598	102
N.J.	24	30	259	236	91
Pa.	80	106	1,670	1,670	100
N. Atl.	255	326	3,358	3,360	100.1
Ohio	106	175	1,155	1,155	100
Ind.	61	85	1,010	909	90
Ill.	118	164	1,118	1,241	111
Mich.	69	100	1,002	1,052	105
Wis.	67	87	761	700	92
E.N. Cent.	421	611	5,046	5,057	100.2
Minn.	354	411	4,176	4,176	100
Iowa	128	131	2,576	2,499	97
Mo.	279	335	1,838	1,746	95
N. Dak.	105	65	1,042	1,042	100
S. Dak.	63	41	487	414	85
Nebr.	141	148	1,546	1,391	90
Kans.	128	173	1,119	1,119	100
W.N. Cent.	1,198	1,304	12,784	12,387	96.9
Del.	15	17	123	117	95
Md.	52	57	460	414	90
Va.	121	151	1,232	1,294	105
W. Va.	20	26	330	330	100
N.C.	29	35	360	396	110
S.C.	68	82	460	506	110
Ga.	28	35	202	252	125
Fla.	26	30	142	156	110
S. Atl.	359	433	3,309	3,465	104.7
Ky.	41	44	299	290	97
Tenn.	26	28	200	200	100
Ala.	34	32	151	154	102
Miss.	39	35	113	96	85
Ark.	28	30	152	152	100
La.	18	17	69	69	100
Okla.	154	162	1,145	1,202	105
Tex.	704	774	4,701	4,983	106
S. Cent.	1,044	1,122	6,830	7,146	104.6
Mont.	17	16	253	218	86
Idaho	24	22	340	272	80
Wyo.	23	22	199	199	100
Colo.	66	76	947	710	75
N. Mex.	14	15	60	60	100
Ariz.	11	18	107	93	87
Utah	50	55	2,109	1,582	75
Nev.	8	7	51	38	75
Wash.	134	150	1,637	1,572	96
Oreg.	384	396	2,605	2,162	83
Calif.	763	900	5,155	4,124	80
West.	1,494	1,677	13,463	11,030	81.9
U. S.	4,771	5,473	44,790	42,445	94.8